



Shōren-in 青蓮院

The temple complex of Shōren-in houses several buildings and gardens. Although mentioned in famous guidebooks for Kyoto, this temple still creates a soothing and calming atmosphere when one sits down on the veranda.. Watch over the puffy green moss towards the pond and its stone settings and think about all the great history happened in and around Shōren-in.

History

This temple was founded by Emperor Toba during the late Heian period. He was a great admirer of Gyogen, the 12th head priest of Enryaku-ji located at Mount Hiei.

Toba initiated Gyogen, becoming the teacher of his son Kakukaihoshin'no and built them Shoren-in in Kyoto, with his own palace as a model.

The name was inspired by Shōren-bo, the most popular lodging facility of Enryaku-ji.

Later, all monks of Shōren-in always stayed in Shōren-bo during their visit at Mount Hiei.

Shōren-in and Enryaku-ji were always deeply connected. For example, the head priest of Shōren-in was also the head priest of Enryaku-ji.

Since its sixth head priest, all following were always members of the imperial family until the Meiji period, which makes it one of the five Monzeki temples of the Tendai sect in Kyoto.

During the Muromachi period the main garden was most likely designed by Soami. The garden behind Kōbun-tei was built by Kobori Enshō in the Edo period.

Although Shōren-in was also damaged during the Ōnin War and had to face some loss of its land, which is now part of nearby Chion-in during the

Emperor Toba

鳥羽天皇
1103-1156

Monzeki temples are temples which head priests are members of the imperial family. Other examples are: Jisso-in and Ninna-ji.